



**Contact:**

Kirsten Yates

kyates@chattanooga.gov

423.443.5718 (cell)

## **Chattanooga Homeowners Absolved of Sewer Lateral Repair Costs Under City Right-of-Way**

*City Council approves ordinance absolving Chattanooga homeowners of responsibility for repairing sanitary sewer laterals under city right-of-way, eliminating burdensome repair and replacement costs for residents*

**Chattanooga, Tenn. (Tuesday, Oct. 11)** - City Council tonight approved an ordinance transferring responsibility for sanitary sewer laterals under the city right-of-way from homeowners to the City, effectively eliminating many repair and replacement costs for residents.

Sanitary sewer laterals carry wastewater from homes to the main sewer line in the street. Under previous City code, homeowners were responsible for the cost to repair and replace sewer laterals located under the city right-of-way, or the area extending from the homeowner's private property line to the sewer main line. Due to their location, these repairs are often costly — often tens of thousands of dollars — requiring workers to dig up and repair pavement and portions of the road, in addition to the sewer lateral itself.

Now, with a new ordinance amending City code, Chattanooga homeowners who identify a problem with a four-inch sewer lateral in the city right-of-way can report it to the City to handle repairs.

"With the cost of living continuing to increase, my administration is committed to doing everything possible to make it easier for residents to stay in their homes," said Chattanooga Mayor Tim Kelly. "Transferring responsibility for sanitary sewer laterals to the City means that residents have one less burdensome homeownership cost to worry about, and I'm grateful to City Council — particularly co-sponsors Councilman Chip Henderson, Councilwoman Jenny Hill and Council Chairman Darrin Ledford — for their partnership on this effort that will allow us to better support our communities."

Residents who believe they may have a sewer problem should first contact a licensed plumber, who can use a camera to identify if the needed repairs are within the area of City responsibility, as well as attempt to clear any blockage in the line. If the plumber determines the problem is structural, homeowners should submit a request to the City through [311](#) and provide the video footage detailing the approximate location needing repair.

To qualify for repairs through the City, homeowners must be served by the City of Chattanooga wastewater system and must have a bi-directional sewer cleanout installed at the City right-of-way line, if one does not already exist.

Homeowners continue to be responsible for repairs and maintenance of all sanitary sewer service lines located on their property.

The City's Department of Public Works will be able to absorb the estimated cost of the repairs within its existing fiscal year budget, while continuing its ongoing work to repair and rehabilitate sewer lines across the city. Since entering into a [consent decree](#) in 2013 with EPA and the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation, the City has inspected and evaluated 284 miles of pipe and rehabilitated 73 miles of pipe, or about 25 percent of the system.

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